CUMBERLAND'S

No. 8. MINOR THEATRE, Pr. 6d.

BEING A COMPANION TO

Cumberland's British Theatre.

"MY OLD WOMAN:"

A MUSICAL COMEDY, IN THREE ACTS,

By GEORGE MACFARREN, Esq

Author of "Malvina." "Winning a Husband." "Hoaxing." "Guy Faux." &c.

PRINTED FROM THE ACTING COPY,

With Remarks, Biographical & Critical,

By D—G.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

A DESCRIPTION of the COSTUME, Cast of the CHARACTERS, ENTRANCES and EXITS, RELATIVE POSITIONS of the Performers on the Stage, and the whole of the STAGE BUSINESS, as now performed in the METROPOLITAN MINOR THEATRES.

Embellished with

A FINE WOOD ENGRAVING,

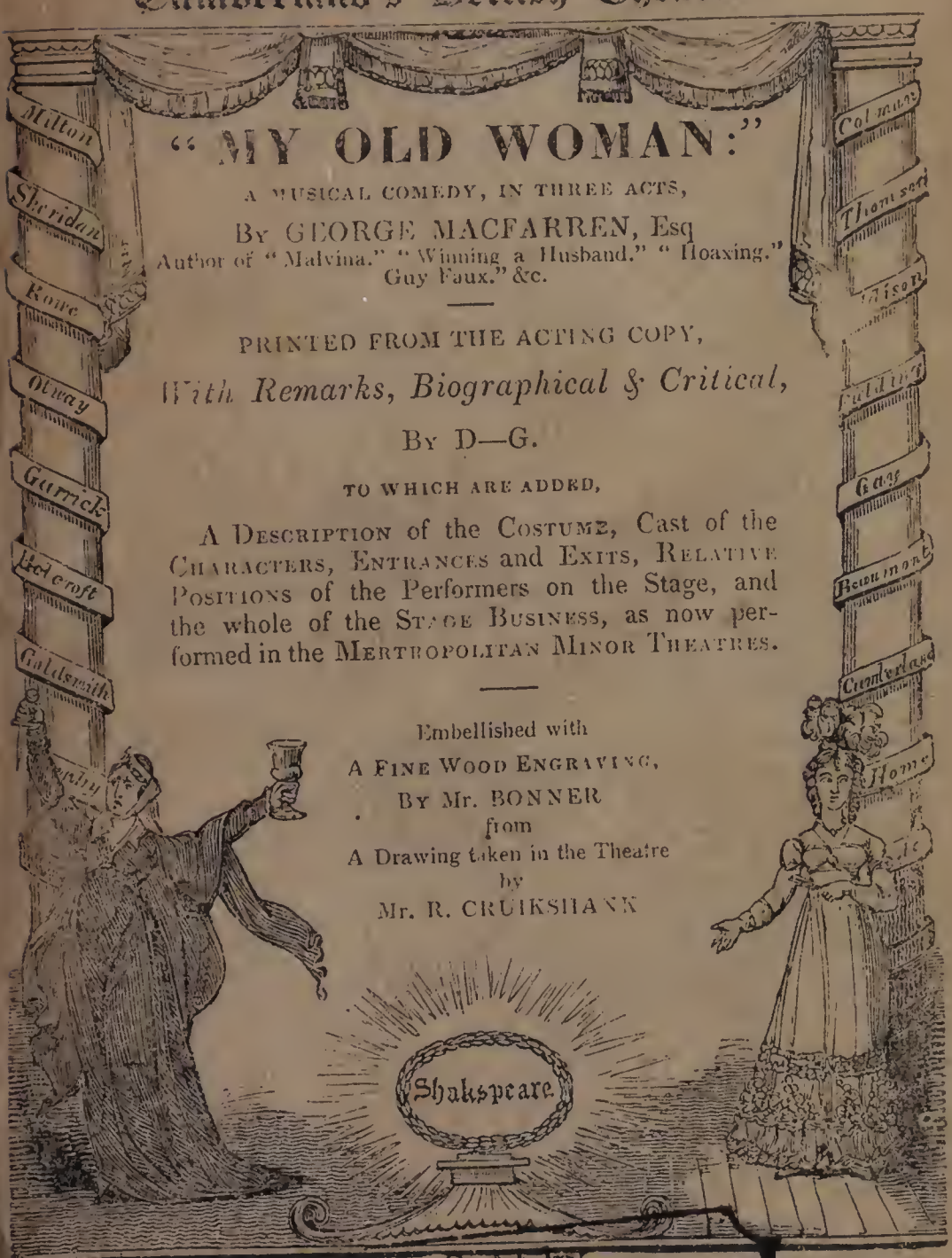
BY Mr. BONNER

from

A Drawing taken in the Theatre

by

Mr. R. CRUIKSHANK



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R. Cruikshank, Del. *Bonner, Sc.*

"My Old Woman."

Girouette. What do I see? A spirit! a fairy! a dream!

Act III. Scene 2.

" MY OLD WOMAN:"

A MUSICAL COMEDY,

In Three Acts,

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The Music by Monsieur Fetis, of Paris; adapted to the English Stage, by Mr. Blewitt.

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As now performed at the

ROYAL SURREY THEATRE.

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REMARKS.

"My Old Woman."

In contemplating the audience of a *Minor theatre*, we are struck with the necessity of attending more particularly to the entertainments that are there exhibited. It is not because the spectators are of a *lower grade* that we should minister to their depraved taste by vulgarity and buffoonery: it rather becomes us to offer them something *better*—to give their minds a different direction—to improve their natures, and not sink them still deeper in grossness and ignorance. This (exclaim the enemies of dramatic decency) would be throwing pearls to swine—we deny it—experience warrants the assertion, that virtuous example is not altogether lost upon the multitude. When a moral precept or a generous sentiment have made no impression on the philosophical and refined, the hearts of the illiterate have been awakened and raised—

"I could have hugged the greasy rogues! they pleas'd me."

It was, therefore, with considerable pleasure, that we beheld, at a *Minor Theatre*, a drama combining entertainment and instruction. Our anticipation of the plot shall not prevent the reader's discovery—we will not strip "My Old Woman" of her borrowed robes. Nine times out of ten it requires no great insight into dramatic futurity, to prophesy how a piece will *end;* but in the present instance the *secret* is so well kept until the *very close*, that all our *guesses* in its progress proved futile; and we were agreeably surprised when the *denouement* put an end to our conjectures, and satisfied our curiosity. The character of the Countess is excellently conceived and supported; the sentiments she is made to utter, have our entire approval; and we may extend the same remark to those that belong to the French prisoner, Colonel Girouette. There is a certain humorist, one Michael Witzgoff, who, like Sancho Panza, seems to have been born with his belly full of *proverbs*. These he dis-

penses with equal liberality—but his memory never compasses more than *one-half* of the proposition; for the remainder, he is indebted to his own ready wit and invention—and this is the cream of the joke, for considerable ingenuity is displayed in the *burlesque turn* given to an endless variety of every-day truisms; the queer terminations of which fall so unexpectedly on the ear, that we are constrained to laugh out, even at the risk of offending against the rules of *Aristotle*. This character is very humorously played by Mr. Vale, of whom (from our short intercourse with the minor drama) we know but little—he and his audience seem to understand each other perfectly. He hits to a nicety the precise time and place for a joke, the form and pressure of which are instantly recognised by his merry hearers. There is another performer, Mr. Wynne, with whom we have scraped *dramatic* acquaintance, in the part of Colonel Gironette. This gentleman, from an accident, has but *one hand;* but he is incomparably better than many comedians who possess the advantage of *two*. He has a *head*, and appears to understand his author. This manual defect is, however, so artfully supplied, that, had we not *previously* been aware of it, we should hardly have discovered it. Great praise is due to Mrs. Fitzwilliam in the Countess Xenia: her dress was most characteristic and curious; and her assumption of old age, with its tottering step, tremulous voice, and beauty shining through a thousand wrinkles, was as perfect as need be. She *sang* as an old lady *should sing*, who in her youth had been celebrated for that pleasing accomplishment—with great sweetness, but not without a *shake* or *jar*, that nature, however tutored by art, when in the vale of years, cannot entirely overcome. She mingled in the part considerable pathos and good humour, exhibiting all the delightful *traits* of a happy virtuous old age.

Mr. Macfarren is the author of this pleasing drama.—His other productions are *Malvina, Guy Faux, &c.*

☞ D—— G.

Costume.

COLONEL GIROUETTE.—*First dress:* Blue frock-coat—white waistcoat—military trousers. *Second dress:* Full dress costume of the French hussars.

ERNEST OLMUTZ.—Green frock-coat and trousers—white waistcoat—fur travelling-cap.

MICHAEL.—Orange double-breasted coat, trimmed with black fur—long white waistcoat—black satin waistcoat—red stockings—shoes and buckles—powdered peruke—cocked hat.

SERFS and VASSALS.—Green tunics—red trousers—Polish caps—a silver badge on the left arm.

COUNTESS.—*First dress:* Green satin pelisse, trimmed with white fur, and embroidered with gold—a high black velvet cap, with gold bands—long muslin veil thrown back over the shoulders—long walking-cane, with gold head—white wig—diamond necklace. *Second dress:* White satin.

VICTORINE.—*First dress:* Green embroidered tunic, with rich silver shoulder-knots—green pantaloons—yellow Polish cap, with silver tassels—yellow and silver sash—yellow half-boots. *Second dress:* White satin.

CATHARINE. White silk, with blue apron and ornaments.

FEMALES.—White petticoats—short open green gowns.

Cast of the Characters,

As Performed at the Surrey Theatre, 1829.

Colonel Girouette, in the French service, a prisoner of war in Russia	Mr. Wynne.
Mr. Ernest Olmutz, a Russian artist	Mr. Forrester.
Michael Witzgoff, steward of the Countess	Mr. Vale.
Peterhoff } *Serfs of the Countess*	Mr. Yardly.
Nicholaff } *Serfs of the Countess*	Mr. Smith.
The Countess Xenia	Mrs. Fitzwilliam.
Catharine, her femme-de-chambre	Mrs. Vale.
Victorine, disguised as her page	Miss Somerville.

Guests, Vassals, Peasantry, &c.

SCENE—The Castle of Wilna, in Polish Russia.

STAGE DIRECTIONS.

The Conductors of this work print no Plays but those which they have seen acted. The *Stage Directions* are given from personal observations, during the most recent performances.

EXITS and ENTRANCES.

R. means *Right*; L. *Left*; D. F. *Door in Flat*; R. D. *Right Door*; L. D. *Left Door*; S. E. *Second Entrance*; U. E. *Upper Entrance*; C. D. *Centre Door.*

RELATIVE POSITIONS.

R. means *Right*; L. *Left*; C. *Centre*; R. C. *Right of Centre*; L. C. *Left of Centre.*

R. RC. C. LC. L.

*** *The Reader is supposed to be on the Stage, facing the Audience.*

"MY OLD WOMAN."

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The Hall of the Castle of Wilna—Folding Doors open to the Garden.*

MICHAEL WITZGOFF *discovered, seated at the table, writing in a large account-book,* R.; *enter* PETERHOFF, NICHOLAFF, *and Groups of Vassals and Peasantry,* C. D.

CHORUS.

Every bosom throbs with pleasure,
As we chant the jocund measure,—
Tune the tabor, pipe, and string—
Merrily dance, merrily sing,
For mirth is on the wing.

Good sir, our freedom excuse;
We come to tell you the news.

Mic. Confusion!
Why this intrusion?

Cho. Silence, all;
For his worship, you see, is engaged.—
Leave the hall,
Or, doubtless, he'll soon be enraged.
Quick! begone!
Lest we intrude;—
See, that frown
Bodes us no good. [*They retire towards* C. D.

Pet. [*Advancing.*] Pardon, we crave,
Good master steward, if we offend——

Mic. Silence! impudent slave!
Or my stock of patience quickly will end.
In vain, midst all this roar,
I add and multiply;
Long accounts are quite a bore—
Three times three—four times four—
No man's so plagued as I.
Though I work day and night,
To make all matters right,
Yet I'm constantly wrong,
For some devil uncivil
My toil will prolong.
Hence, away—hence, away!

Nic. [*Advancing.*] We have only to say,
By our lady's gracious leave,
From our work we get reprieve.
Mic. Oho! say you so?
No longer, then, delay;
When she commands we must obey.
[*Shuts the book.*
Get ye gone—bravely done,
Now welcome sport, till set of sun.

Cho. Every bosom throbs with pleasure,
As we chant the jocund measure,—
Tune the tabor, pipe, and string—
Merrily dance, merrily sing,
For mirth is on the wing.
Trip away,
Light and gay.—
Huzza! huzza! huzza!

[*Exeunt Chorus, &c.* C. D.

Mic. Ah, go your ways, noisy brawlers as ye are!—A holyday, forsooth! this new lady of ours—who, by the bye, is an old one—I say nothing, but she certainly must be a little crazy in the head, as well as in the understandings. The late lord of this domain, during twenty good years that I was his steward and major-domo, never gave a holyday without consulting me—in fact, the only step he ever took, without my special advice, was to die one day; and a pretty botheration has ensued—the estate, the vassals, and the castle, have been sold to this old Countess Xenia; and I, Michael Witzgoff, have been knocked down as lot one of the fixtures. Well, they say people get wisdom with age,—if so, what must my lady have been sixty or seventy years ago? I argue with her, but she will have her own way: I give her advice, but, as the proverb wisely says, "there are none so deaf as those who wont hear." It is very certain that all is not quite right; her pretty waiting-woman, Catharine, has often told me there was a profound secret. I fancy I have penetration enough to see through the mystery—she is—I say nothing, but——

Enter CATHARINE, L.

Mic. Ah, my pretty little Catharine! whither so fast, my dear?

Cat. To the lawn, Master Witzgoff. There is a holyday, and a dance upon the lawn, and——

Mic. A dance, too! Well, I say nothing, but this lady of ours—And pray, my dear, why is all this merriment?

Cat. Why?—there's a question! Have not you heard,

for a week past, that to-day is the birth-day of Colonel Girouette, the French prisoner of war, to whom my lady owes her life, and whom she has taken the charge of, until his wounds are cured?

Mic. There, again! my lady is certainly—but I say nothing—the very last Friday was my birth-day, I was forty-eight years old, and yet—you know the proverb says, "What is good for the gander, is also good for the goose." The late lord of these domains acted more reasonably: the only birth-day he ever kept, was the day his wife died in child-bed of his dead son.

Cat. Prithee let me go, lest your miserable stories should put me out of spirits. I love a dance and a birth-day fête beyond everything.

Mic. Except, with exceptions—for instance, now, you love me. Ah, pretty Catharine, when we are married, 'faith! we'll have a birth-day every week in the year.

Cat. Lud-a-mercy! Master Witzgoff, that will be too much.

Mic. Which, as the proverb says, "too much of a good thing is not good enough for every body."

Cat. That is precisely the reason why I wish to shorten this conversation.

Mic. We will change the subject, my dear. Now that we are alone, and have nothing better to do, prithee tell me the wonderful secret you have promised ever since your arrival here, in the Castle of Wilna, six months ago.

Cat. A secret, did you say, Master Witzgoff?

Mic. Yes; my lady's secret.

Cat. For two reasons, I cannot indulge you.—In the first place, it is my lady's secret, and I must not give you what don't belong to me; and, in the second place, the dance is already begun, and I can't resist. So, prithee excuse me. [*Going.*

Mic. Ah, wicked rogue! I see how it is—but I say nothing—that jackanapes, young Victor, the page—yes, I understand,—Mr. Victor will be there.

Cat. You are jealous, sir.

Mic. Jealous!—no, I am reasonable enough to have a better opinion of myself. But "safe bind, and never loose," is a good motto; so come along, my dear: since there is to be a holyday-caper, 'faith! I will partake with you; and, in comparison with any other dancer,

you will find "six of the one, and a dozen and a half of 'tother." [*Going*, L.

Enter VICTORINE, *disguised as a Page*, L.

Vic. Hold, master steward, though the odds are so greatly in your favour, the chances are against you. By my lady's desire, you, Mr. Michael Witzgoff, must wait on the Colonel with her congratulations; while I attend the pretty little waiting-woman with my own.

[*Takes Catharine's hand.*

Mic. There, again—my lady is certainly—but I say nothing. And this jackdaw—but I will reason with him. Stripling, I'd have you to know there is a proverb which says, "a person may be more free than disagreeable!"

Vic. Hang your musty proverbs; there is but one that we young fellows or young ladies have anything to do with, and that is, "birds of a feather flock together." Thus we prove the truth of it—come along, Catharine, to the lawn! to the lawn!

Mic. Nay, but, seriously and in right reasoning, I——

Vic. You are always reasoning, though not always right, master steward; and, because you are so very serious, the countess has deputed to you the solemn duty of attending to everything in-doors; while we thoughtless giddy ones are sporting without. Adieu.

Cat. Farewell, Master Witzgoff—don't be jealous; this is all according to your own sedate lessons; for, as I intend to make a very prudent wife, it is fit I should sow all my wild oats before marriage. Ha, ha, ha!

[*Exeunt Victorine and Catharine*, C. D.

Mic. So, they are gone—and Catharine, too—to prefer such a pitiful varlet.—Well, I say nothing—but, in pairing off with him, it must be confessed, she has "shot at a pigeon and missed a blackbird." [*Exit*, R.

Re-enter VICTORINE, *conducting* MR. ERNEST OLMUTZ, C. D.

Vic. This way, sir; you are welcome to Wilna. [*Aside.*] That look—that voice—it is surely he.

Ern. The Countess Xenia is not yet visible, I presume?

Vic. No, sir—that is—I—be seated, sir; I will acquaint my lady that Mr. Olmutz is here.

Ern. How! is my name known to you?

Vic. Never to be forgotten! I beg pardon—in one minute I will return to you.

Ern. One moment ere you go. How strange is this

conduct—say, who are you? Explain the air of mystery that surrounds you, and tell me whence came your knowledge of me?

Vic. Suffice it, for the present, to know that I am page to the Countess Xenia—that you, though a Russian born, were educated in Paris, and, therefore, should not be surprised that a Parisian recognises you.

Ern. You have met me, then, in Paris. Strange that I cannot recollect you.

Vic. Whoever has seen Mr. Ernest Olmutz cannot forget him.—Pardon me, I allude to your works.

Ern. You have seen some of my portraits, then? There is something marvellous in all this, that I must know.

Vic. That depends upon circumstances. You have been at court, I believe.

Ern. I am painter to the Emperor; I hold his commission, and live in his palace.

Vic. Then you ought to know that there are state secrets, that cannot always be divulged. [*Exit*, R.

Ern. What am I to think of all this? The liberal advance I have received for this embassy, the peculiarity of the invitation, and the mystery of my reception, astonish me: add to this, that in the remote part of Polish Russia I find the refinements of a Parisian palace, blooming parterres, fountains, music, dancing, and gayety—surely, my good genius has directed me here, to awaken scenes and thoughts never to be forgotten, and never to be recalled.—Heigho! beautiful Victorine! why has fate so cruelly snapped the rosy chain that bound us? But I am getting sentimental—no one approaches—the house seems empty—all is silent—my little state secret-keeper vanished this way, to proceed to the countess's apartments—I will follow, in quest of adventures. Pray heaven, the old lady may not turn out a Mother Bunch, Mother Goose, or old Mother Hubbard; for, though disappointment has made me proof against youthful charms, there is no withstanding the snares of an enchantress, with eighty years' practice. Thus, then, I proceed to the proof. [*Exit after Victorine*, R.

SCENE II.—*An elegant Drawing-Room, furnished with sofas, tables, book-shelves, &c.—A door at the back.*

Enter VICTORINE *in haste*, R.

Vic. It is he! Ernest Olmutz! so long sought, so long deplored! Dear, generous countess, to thy libe-

rality I owe this, among a hundred kindnesses—let me hasten to offer my poor payment—a grateful sigh.

[*Exit*, C. D.

Enter MICHAEL, R.

Mic. There again—that varlet, the page, irreverently pushed me aside in the entry just now, and is gone into my lady's chamber. Well, I say nothing, but for a discreet female of four-score and upwards—I hate scandal, for the proverb says, "give a dog an ill name, and be hanged for it." But hush, the colonel is here.

Enter COLONEL GIROUETTE, L.

Good morrow to your excellency.

Gir. Good morrow, steward.

Mic. How fares your honour?

Gir. Thank you; not so well, but that I hope to be better; nor so ill, but that I may chance to be worse. My wounds are nearly well, and your lady's kindness makes imprisonment more pleasant than even liberty would be without her. Are there any letters to-day?

Mic. None: the courier from St. Petersburg has not yet arrived; but there is news astir—generous England has sent out supplies, and these rascally French invaders——

Gir. Hold; I do not doubt the generosity of your friends, the English, since even their enemies acknowledge it: but you may remember that I am a Frenchman, and you may learn that we have an unaccountable propensity to tweak every nose that dares to turn up scornfully against us.

Mic. Excuse me, colonel, it was a slip; you know there is an old proverb says, "there is many a slip 'twixt the cup and the saucer."

Gir. Psha! leave me, and convey to your lady my best compliments and regards.

Mic. Ah! that reminds me that I am on a complimentary mission from her ladyship to your excellency, touching this happy anniversary of your excellency's birth. I say nothing, but years bring honour, and, no doubt, in a score or two, you will be something—at present, I—that is, by right reasoning and according to the proverb, "the less that is said is soonest finished," and so, your excellency, I humbly take my leave.

[*Exit*, R.

Gir. Ha, ha ha! the fellow is as prolix as a court-martial, and as unintelligible as grape-shot; his wit is like a broken bayonet, and his tongue like the red flag over a suttler's tent, to denote where noisy words and empty vessels abound.

Re-enter MICHAEL, *with* ERNEST OLMUTZ, R.

Mic. It is impossible; her ladyship has not left her apartments.

Ern. I tell you, I must see her ladyship.

Mic. Colonel, I call on you to protect her ladyship against——

Gir. Against a legion, if they dared to assail her.—Now, sir, your business here?—Eh! what! my old friend and school-fellow, Ernest Olmutz!

Ern. My beloved Girouette, your hand.

Gir. And my heart, too.

Mic. There, again; surely, right reason has deserted every body in this house—a suspicious person intrudes himself into good company, and, instead of drawing swords, we talk of——I say nothing, but——

Gir. Hark ye, Mr. Steward, your presence is not indispensable, and therefore——

Mic. Your excellency is indulgent—I understand—the proverb says, "a nod is as good as a wink to a deaf coachman." [*Exit*, R.

Gir. This moment is one of the happiest of my life: a thousand recollections of our youth, our follies, and our mishaps, flash on the mirror of my mind, and dazzle with their reflected lustre all around us.

Ern. Believe me, Girouette, the feeling is mutual; for such a sunny moment, one would endure an age of shade.

Gir. Well, my dear Ernest, next to the joy of this meeting, comes the hope that your success in your profession has been equal to your merits.

Ern. Even my own sanguine wishes are surpassed.

Gir. I rejoice to hear it: but do you not wish yourself again in Paris, daubing canvass in the Louvre all day, and rioting in the Palais Royal all night.

Ern. No, 'faith! Paris has no charms for me now, unless it were to get you out of amorous scrapes, and laugh at your eternal constancies of six hours' duration. The misfortune that hangs so dark a cloud about my heart, has long since blunted my taste for such matters.

Gir. Psha! you know the fable of the fox and the grapes.

Ern. Again you are wrong; for, were I so disposed, I can assure you, in frolic and diversion, there is no place superior to Petersburg. They dance like Parisians, sing like Italians, drink like Dutchmen, and bluster like John Bull.

Gir. But have they any light, dapper, sweet-lipped, roguish-eyed women? Any termagant prudes, who wound every finger that approaches them, or delicate rosebuds, who tempt one to pluck them and make us regret that they cannot be restored?

Ern. Plenty, of all fashions and shades; from the blue eye that beams softly over you like the morning, to the black eye that dazzles like the evening star. My success in catching their varied features, has gained me great practice as a portrait-painter; yet I had hardly dreamed that my fame could have spread so many leagues from the capitol.

Gir. Explain yourself.

Ern. I am here by express, to paint one of the loveliest of her sex.

Gir. Where will you find her?

Ern. Here, in the Castle of Wilna.

Gir. What! "my old woman"?

Ern. Heaven knows! there is so much mystery in the business, that I shall wonder at nothing. Three weeks since, Stamitz, the banker of Petersburg, introduced himself to my painting-room. "You are called Olmutz?" said he. "Right," answered I. "Ernest Olmutz?"—"Right again." "You were educated in Paris, and studied under David?" "Just so." "You have returned to Russia two years?"—"Exactly."

Gir. A very soothsayer; fit to expound all the riddles in the almanack.

Ern. And the golden numbers into the bargain; for, placing four thousand roubles on the table, he bade me hasten to the castle of the Countess Xenia, at Wilna, where I should find, for a subject of my art, one of the loveliest of her sex.

Gir. He was right; she is so—"my old woman" is at once the loveliest, the oldest, the most generous, and the most wrinkled of womankind.

Ern. It is now your turn to explain yourself.

Gir. Willingly, my dear Ernest. Know, first and

foremost, then, that I was attached to the staff of Napoleon, in the memorable battle of Smolensko. In the rout that ensued, our soldiers captured the baggage of a division of the Russian army.

Ern. Poor fellows! In their forlorn situation, such a conquest must have been fortunate.

Gir. In the midst of the confusion, I was surprised by the voice of an infirm old lady, seated in an elegant landau, attended only by her young page and a female servant. She implored me to protect her from the dangers around: I looked at her—she reminded me of my mother: you will judge of my emotion.

Ern. I can; for I, too, have known the pain of absence.

Gir. She said she was the widow of a Russian officer, travelling to a retirement in the Castle of Wilna; and entreated me to afford her a safe passage through our disordered troops.

Ern. It was the old Countess Xenia, I presume.

Gir. It was: she appeared about eighty years old, but one could see, through her wrinkles, that beauty had once bloomed on her cheek; and her figure still showed that the Graces had not spared their blandishments: her deportment and sprightly conversation delighted me.

Ern. I do not wonder, for, though old, she was still a woman.

Gir. Truce to your raillery; when you are better acquainted, you will own, it is impossible to know and not to admire her. But to my story: it was a bitter night; man and the elements alike at war—my comrades fell, one by one, as we proceeded; death grasping their limbs ere life had left their lips—the Cossacks came in legions—our numbers were too feeble to oppose them. The soldiers entreated me to fly and quit my prize. "Never," I exclaimed—"away, my friends, and live to cherish the young mistresses of your hearts; I will remain and die to preserve my poor old woman."

Ern. They wisely took your counsel?

Gir. You wrong them—in danger's hour, the soldier and his officer are knit in closer bondage. They rallied as the dreadful moment came: their frozen hands, scarce able to grasp their muskets, thrice sustained the overwhelming charge at the point of the bayonet, when a random shot struck me in the breast, and I fell at the countess's feet, praying for France and for my mother.

Ern. Such is the fortune of war!

Gir. A bounteous fortune it has been to me! When I recovered, the affray was ended—my faithful soldiers had perished round me—every one had fled, except "my old woman"—who, with maternal care, conveyed me to this castle, of which she had recently become the possessor; where I have been suffered to remain upon my parole—a prisoner at large.

Ern. A most enchanting imprisonment, truly!

Gir. Enchanting, indeed; for, with the power of a fairy and the taste of a poet, she has continued, during the severity of a Russian winter, to create a Parisian paradise; in order, as she says, to make my convalescence more certain and agreeable.

Ern. Are you quite sure, that, in curing the external wound, she has not inflicted a deeper within.

Gir. Phoo! she is eighty—has a palsied hand—cannot dance; yet her eye has not lost its lustre, and her voice is music itself.

Ern. I see how it is; you are half in love.

Gir. If she were only forty or forty-five, I would not answer for my continence. I often fancy, when alone, how lovely she must have been at eighteen, and am ravished with the picture.

Ern. What will be your rapture when you behold my picture?

Gir. And especially if it is to be, as I suspect, a birthday present. Yes, my friend, to-day my generous old woman celebrates that event throughout her domains; and proves, by inviting you hither, that, in doing agreeable things, she has the happiest knack in the world.

Enter VICTORINE, C. D.

Vic. The countess is here.

Gir. See, she comes; now judge for yourself.

Ern. Curiosity is on the tiptoe.

TRIO AND CHORUS.

Vic. See, the countess, our generous friend, comes this way;
And cheerfully smiles, like morning's genial ray.

Enter the COUNTESS XENIA, C. D., *attended by* CATHARINE, *and three other Femmes de Chambre*—GIROUETTE *advances to offer his arm.*

Gir. Take my arm, lady dear;
Happy I shall be,
When you trust, void of fear,
For support to me.

Cou. Bless'd our lot, when through grief
Or old age we bend,
Thus to gain kind relief
From a faithful friend.
Chorus. Oh, what a blessing,
Midst ills distressing,
Should heaven send
One faithful friend.

Cou. Thanks, many thanks, colonel, for your helping hand—but soft—we have a stranger here. Ladies, we must retire.

Vic. Your ladyship will be pleased to learn, that Mr. Ernest Olmutz, the artist, attends your summons.

Cou. He is welcome to Wilna.

Gir. Ah, madam! how shall I ever prove my gratitude? Believe me, my dear deliverer, the scenes you have cultivated around me, and the friend you have now restored to my heart, make me fancy myself in my dear native home.

Cou. How happy am I, to be able to awaken such ideas; no emotion is equal to the thoughts of home.

TRIO.—COUNTESS, VICTORINE, *and* CATHARINE.

Cou. Hail, native home!
Scene of pleasure,
Mem'ry's treasure!
Whether far or near we roam.
Source of content to each age and degree,
Whate'er is tranquil, innocent, or free—
Whate'er is sacred, seems inspired by thee!
All. Happy! if, beneath this peaceful dome,
Friendship wakes one genial thought of home!

Vic. Dear, native home!
Thoughts endearing,
Visions cheering,
Float around, where'er we roam!
But, oh! how bright is the soul-gladdening ray
That friendship sheds along the path we stray,
To soothe our cares and gild our lonely way!
All. Happy! now, beneath this peaceful dome,
Friendship wakens glowing thoughts of home!

Cou. It is well.—Ladies, I will not detain you longer: Victor only will remain. [*Exeunt Catharine and Femmes de Chambre.*] I am rejoiced, colonel, to find you in such spirits: if the earnest wishes of an old woman may be received, many happy returns of this anniversary—and even happier ones—will not be wanting.

Gir. The prayer breathed by such excellence must surely prosper.

Cou. Nay, nay, colonel; this is a day of compliment to you, not flattery to me. But the morning is wearing away; how shall we beguile it? In the afternoon, we shall have a little fête in honour of the day; but this morning—Victor.

Vic. Your ladyship.

Cou. Bring hither the small book from my escritoire. [*Exit Victorine,* C. D.—*returns with a book.*] I have prepared a little token for the occasion: a collection of anecdotes relative to the late campaign—Romantic stories, almost beyond credence, which have passed within my knowledge, and which I have transcribed with my own hand—do me the favour to accept the volume. [*Gives it.*

Gir. With gratitude. Amidst its records, be assured, the goodness of the donor will not be forgotten.—Ernest, you see how kind a friend I have.—If her ladyship will allow it, I know a few pages of the book will prove interesting to you, as well as myself.

Ern. I have an anxious curiosity: her ladyship, I trust, will indulge me.

Cou. Nay, nay, when alone, it may beguile a tedious hour: at present——

Gir. What say you, then, to sit this morning to my friend?

Cou. Nay, nay, the fatigue of his journey——

Ern. Name it not, your ladyship, I entreat.

Gir. He burns with impatience to commence his work—the ardour of an artist surmounts all difficulties.

Cou. It is well, it is well—Victor, my drawing-box and folio. [*Victorine brings drawing-implements, Ernest seats himself at a table.*] I may work a little, I suppose, sir?

Ern. Certainly, I would not make a portrait of still life; but a picture, as animated as the original.

Gir. I know you will succeed; and I anticipate a first-rate miniature, true to nature in every feature.

Cou. So much the worse for me; at eighteen years old, one is anxious to have a perfect resemblance; but at my age——

Gir. I shall prize it, though you were even a century old—eh! that is—[*Aside.*] I find I had better be a silent spectator—[*They sit.*] Now, Ernest, to your task.

Ern. My work is commenced; her ladyship is at hers; pray what is to be yours?

Gir. Mine? oh, I will undertake the labour of doing nothing.

Cou. It is well: how industrious we shall all be—proceed Mr. Olmutz, without fear and without flattery.—If you can produce something that will remind the colonel, when he returns to France, of one who takes great interest in his welfare, it is all that can be wished: I assure you, I have no desire to create jealousies among the younger attachments that he hopes to find unchanged at his return.

Gir. 'Faith, madam, I have no hopes on that head; my friend Ernest is aware of that.

Ern. At least, I can vouch that you have no claims.

Cou. Nay, nay, you do not mean to assert, that there is no gentle Daphne, no faithful Phillis, no affectionate mistress at home.

Gir. None, upon honour. Do you think there is, Ernest?

Ern. If I might judge from circumstances, I should say, no. My friend, madam, though but a colonel in the army, is a general in love.

Gir. Ha! ha! upon my word, but a recruit just enlisted. It is true, I am not insensible to beauty, tenderness, and sprightly conversation; but for a serious, sober, discreet, and sincere love affair, I believe I may truly plead innocent—I take credit for my forbearance.

Cou. Nay, nay, every body should be in love, at least once in their lives—deeply and truly in love: not for the present moment, for that is often full of cares and pains and anxieties; but that we may have one sweet spot upon our memories, whereon we may gaze with unforgotten devotion, and sigh without pain. Believe me, colonel, such recollections tend to soften our characters and tempers—they make middle life more indulgent, and old age more amiable; and when you see gray hairs, calm, agreeable, and tolerant, you can truly say, with your countryman, Fontenelle, "Love and Time fly together."

Ern. Take care, madam; for your precept and your practice agree so well, that my friend cannot help profiting by your example.

Gir. Hold, Ernest: you ought to know, that the Countess Xenia has ever been esteemed the most prudent as well as the most amiable lady of the Russian court.

Cou. Ah! colonel, the reputation one gets at court is not always to be credited: the gay world often put on their characters with their dresses—I, myself, have

not always been exactly what I seem. A widow at eighteen years of age, I was in possession of a large fortune and an ardent spirit; it was my fate to encounter a young man of education, liberality, and sentiment——

Gir. And he loved you, of course.

Cou. Nay, nay, colonel, you are wrong—I loved him, but he was the only person who doubted.

Gir. Impossible—he must have been a dolt. You treated him as he deserved, I hope!

Cou. I would recount the history of our intercourse, but I fear it will be tedious——

Gir. Interesting, as the story of my own exploits.

Cou. Let us sit closer, then, and I will unlock the sealed volume—listen.

[*The Countess is seated in the* C.—*Girouette draws his chair close to her,* L.—*Ernest is at the table on her* R. *and Victorine attending behind her chair.*

Gir. Ernest, do not disturb us with the scraping of your pencils—Victorine, keep your thumbs at peace—I am all attention.

Enter MICHAEL, PETEROFF, *and* NICHOLAFF, R.

Mic. Madam, I come to——

Gir. To spoil the pleasantest chit-chat in the world—Was ever such a marplot!

Mic. Yes, my lady, I come to say that—that is, I say nothing—but the courier is just arrived from St. Petersburg, and I am out of breath.

Gir. Would that the courier had galloped down your throat, and stopped your tongne and your breath together.

Cou. Nay, nay,—my worthy steward has doubtless something imperative to communicate. Proceed, good Michael,—we attend you.

Mic. Well, then, first, as I said before, the courier has arrived from St. Petersburg, there is a proclamation from the Emperor, the heralds are drumming and trumpeting, the little boys are shouting, the French prisoners of war are looking as bitter as rue—Siberia is a bitter cold place—in short——

Gir. At length we are coming to the short, it seems—quick, sirrah! or—— [*Threatens him.*

Mic. Yes; the proverb says, "short reckonings make tall acquaintances;" and so—let me just fetch one sigh, and then—— [*Sighs.*

FINALE.

Mic. Oh, prithee pardon mistakes and blunders;
My wits are lost, 'twixt grief and fear—
Gir. Proceed! No doubt, this tale of wonder's
A mountain lab'ring, will appear.
Mic. The story's brimming full of sorrow.—
Gir. & Vic. Ha, ha, ha, ha!
Mic. You'll cry to morrow.
Gir. & Vic. We'll laugh to-day, and cry to-morrow.
Vic. Now, quickly all your ills repeat;
For he that any mischief knows,
If he is cunning and discreet,
Tells all, and goes.

Mic. Prepare for grief;—
There's no relief——
All. Be brief!
Gir. 'Tis past belief!

Cou. Alas! why this emotion?
Good Michael, say, what notion
Breeds this trouble and commotion?

Mic. In every lane and street,
The officers we meet,
With drum and trumpet's sound,
Proclaiming all around,
Obedient to the law,
Each prisoner of war,
To morrow, by break of day,
Must pack up all, without delay,
And to Siberia march away.
All. Oh, Heaven!—To Siberia!
Cou. Hope, then, no longer I cherish.—
Vic. Cou. Mic. & Ern. In such a sterile climate, an invalid must perish!
All. The rosy smile of Hope, no longer now we cherish—
In such a sterile clime, the stoutest heart will perish!
Yet, though reckless Fate has struck the blow,
Gentle Love may soothe our bitter woe.

Enter CATHARINE, *Vassals, and Peasants,* R.

CHORUS.

Let every heart and hand
Unite, without delay,
To change the stern command,
And drive dull care away?

[*Exeunt, in confusion.*

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*The Court-yard of the Castle.*

Enter MICHAEL, CATHARINE, *and Servants*, R.

Mic. Here, Peter, Lodwig, Christopher, and the rest of you, away with these notes of invitation! Call at every respectable house in the neighbourhood and invite the young and the old; for it is my lady's express wish and desire that all her friends and acquaintances should be present this evening, to witness—I say nothing, but, on this wonderful occasion, as the proverb says, "seeing will be"—more than incredible. Away with ye all, to your several posts, [*Gives letters.*] while I post off to the notary with these deeds. [*Taking papers from his pocket.*] Begone, there is not a moment to spare.

Cat. What, are we to have no dancing after all? and no holyday? and no feast?

Mic. Yes; two feasts, and two holydays, and two dances. Be double diligent this afternoon, and, I promise you, that for two whole days you shall do nothing at all—twice over.

Sers. Huzza! [*Exeunt*, L.

Mic. Away with ye! work to-day, and play for a week. If that is not according to right reason, why, then, I say you are a pack of unreasonable cormorants, undeserving of such a good mistress, or such an amiable steward as—hold—I say nothing—"self-praise is no communication."

Cat. The proverb, for once, is right; for, surely, there never was so conceited and uncommunicative a person in the world. Now, if I were steward and major-domo to the Countess Xenia, I would willingly satisfy the laudable curiosity of her ladyship's own femme-de-chambre respecting the secrets that are now in agitation.

Mic. Do not "measure other people's corn with your own pint-pot," my pretty Catharine. Suffice it to know, that my lady is, as I have often said before—but I won't say anything; the colonel is—but I can't say anything; and the secret is—but I dare not say anything.

Cat. I, too, have a secret—a prodigious secret—an astounding secret.

Mic. The proverb says, "fish with a gudgeon to catch a race-horse."—Ah, pretty Catharine! is it not so?

Well, according to right reasoning—that is—tell me the secret you have so long kept from me, and you shall know mine. You know, my dear, the proverb says, "exchange is no burglary;" and so——

Cat. And so, you are going to break open the secret?

Mic. Upon conditions—do you agree?

Cat. I can't disagree with you, Master Witzgoff; at all events, till after we are married.

Mic. Well, then—remember, I say nothing—but the colonel, our French prisoner of war, to avoid being sent off to Siberia, to-morrow morning, is going to become a Russian citizen to-night, and gain his liberty.

Cat. Gain his liberty!

Mic. Yes; by getting married. You see, my dear, the proverb always comes right, "there are more ways of hanging a dog than by sending him to Siberia."

Cat. To be married!—and to whom, pray?

Mic. Why, as to whom—I—that is—don't be inquisitive—I can't tell you, exactly, because I have not been able to get at particulars myself; but here are my lady's instructions to the Notary, who is my most particular friend; I am going to him forthwith, and am sure to learn everything; but, at present, as I don't exactly comprehend, why, of course, you'll excuse me—but I say nothing. And now for my lady's secret.

Cat. My lady's secret—hem! well, then, you will please to recollect, that you have been going, forthwith, to the Notary's for a quarter of an hour; and, as you don't exactly comprehend why, of course, you'll excuse me—but I say nothing. So fare you well!

DUET.—MICHAEL *and* CATHARINE.

Cat. Farewell! I must leave you,—
But do not grieve you,
For, though absent, I'll be true.
Mic. Away! artful creature,
Each look and feature
Plainly tells me you're a shrew.
With smiling and coaxing,
Take other folks in;
I see no jokes in
Cheating and hoaxing.
Cat. Be not so slightful,
Joking's delightful;
But, when you're spiteful,
You look quite frightful.
Mic. Hence! hence! I'll ne'er forgive you!
Cat. Nay, nay, I won't believe you.
Both. No, no, no, no!

Cat. [*Spoken.*] You are determined?

Mic. Resolute! I have tried you long enough, and find, according to the proverb, "there is no making a silk purse of a pig's satin petticoat."

Mic. As distant far
As moon or star,
In future, I'll remain.
Cat. Then, void of smart,
At once we'll part,
And never meet again.
Both. Fal, lal, &c.
Mic. I'll seek, on this gay day,
Some other lady,
Who will soon supply your loss.
Cat. I'll love, chaste as mellow,
Some handsomer fellow,
Kind and free as you are cross.
Mic. With eye bright as jewel,
Looks very cruel,
Heart hot as fuel,
Words water-gruel!
Cat. He who would plight me,
Soon must invite me;
And, to requite me,
Shoot all who slight me.
Mic. A rope's end will sure prevent ye.
Cat. Secrets I'll tell him plenty.
Both. Yes, yes, yes, yes!

Cat. [*Spoken.*] You had better make it up with me.

Mic. Do you think so? Well, a kiss, then, and we'll get married, and never quarrel, but live discreetly, and go to bed early. I say nothing, but, "early to bed and early to rise, makes a man happy, and father of a large family." [*Kisses her.*

Mic. With such a kiss,
From lip like this,
No longer I'll complain.
Cat. Here discord ends,
Again we're friends,
And ever will remain.
Fal, lal, la! [*Exeunt*, R.

SCENE II.—*The Drawing-Room, as before.*

Enter ERNEST OLMUTZ, L.

Ern. This is, indeed, a day of adventure—and this house the abode of all that is romantic and unaccountable. My friend, who this morning thought himself the happiest fellow in the world, is now on the eve of a frightful journey, that will certainly terminate his existence. Though the countess, with her usual goodness of

heart, has interceded with the governor of Wilna; yet, alas! he has no control over an imperial ukase, and I feel assured we must soon part for ever. Poor Girouette!

Enter GIROUETTE, *in full uniform*, R.

Gir. Ha, ha, ha! rather say, rich Girouette—Girouette the lucky—Girouette the great—Girouette that never sighs at a defeat, and may therefore very reasonably laugh at a triumph—ha, ha, ha! [*Sings.*] "None but the brave deserve the fair."

Ern. More witchcraft, I see. When one would naturally expect to see weeping and gnashing of teeth, sackcloth and ashes—lo! you appear in full uniform, with a gay song and a laughing brow.

Gir. Who should be joyous, if I am not?

Ern. Yes, I see your head is turned.

Gir. True. From the north bluster of a Siberian desert, I turn, very rapturously, to the southern breezes of the Paphian bower.

Ern. Mad, by all that is serious!

Gir. You are mistaken, by all that is comical!

Ern. We must shave your head, and apply the strait waistcoat.

Gir. Are such operations necessary, in order that the coronet and robe of a Russian noble may sit more easily?

Ern. Have the kindness to be intelligible, if you can. What means all this rhodomontade?

Gir. Simply this. To avoid being packed off, according to the emperor's ukase, I am about to become a Russian subject.

Ern. More conjuration; as if it were only necessary to say, hey presto, and become what you please.

Gir. Two words will do it. I have but to wed a native Russian, and it is done.

Ern. But where will you find a lady who will consent to espouse a foreigner, a prisoner, and an enemy of her country?

Gir. Phoo! the selection is made, the offer accepted, the writings prepared, the clergyman putting on his bands—and in half an hour I shall be a legitimate Muscovite husband, and a count of the Russian empire!

Ern. Bravo, legerdemain! And the lady? Some amiable spinster goblin in despair; or some female vampire, who would save her soul at the expense of your body!

Gir. Be respectful to the wife elect of your friend.—She is a devilish kind creature.

Ern. Devilish enough, I will be sworn. Name the fair cream of Tartar.

Gir. What think you of "my old woman?"

Ern. The Countess Xenia! impossible! I begin to suspect you have practised the black art, to delude her.

Gir. No, on my soul; I have no need of it—I have no ambition, no thirst after gold, no desire to rule the court. By this quiet arrangement, I merely step into the possession of four hundred thousand livres a year, a magnificent chateau, and the vassalage of five or six thousand peasantry on the estates.

Ern. It is an Arabian tale.

Gir. Never shall I be able to repay the debt of gratitude to this excellent, this adorable creature!

Ern. Make haste, my friend, or she will die in your arms before the first instalment.

Gir. Phoo! you are yet in the dark. Know that this is but an arrangement of convenience, *pro tem.* "Endeavour," said the dear creature, "to summon courage enough to pass for the husband of an old dowager, and you are free. Your companions will plague you with their jokes, and people in general may sneer at your motives; it will not be pleasant, but it will be better than a journey to Siberia."

Ern. I am of her opinion. But, having convinced the Governor of Wilna that this stratagem is reality, how will you contrive—

Gir. Nothing more easy. You, who are a Russian, ought to know the laws and customs of this country better. The ancient code of Poland is peculiar on this head, and, luckily for me, is still in force at Wilna.—Amongst the Poles, divorces are not allowed; but, to save them from despair, it is usual, in all marriage-contracts, to introduce two or three clauses, called nullities; by which, at the pleasure of the contractors, the affair can be set aside, without interference or appeal.

Ern. I have read some account of these connubially accommodating nullities, in the writings of our legislators—they are singular.

Gir. But very convenient. I wonder the idea has never been imported into France or England. How many aching heads and curtain lectures would be thus avoided!

Ern. But to your business.

Gir. I have left it entirely to my dear old woman, who has inserted in the deeds, now preparing at her Notary's, two or three very good and efficient nullities—so that, in a few months, when the war shall be at an end, we dissolve this union of convenience—"you will return to Paris," said she, "to marry in earnest; and I, who became your spouse to preserve your life, will gladly release you, to make that life happy."

Ern. You are a fortunate fellow, colonel; and the countess, whom I have called a sorceress, I acknowledge to be an angel!

Gir. Right, Ernest, right. They call her aged, but they are wrong; she has only lived through eighty springs, without one winter or autumn.

Ern. I give you joy of your evergreen.

Gir. Hush! some one approaches: remember, this nullity affair is a profound secret—preserve it so, or the governor may make us a sorrowful wedding-day still.

Enter VICTORINE, C. D.

Vic. When my lord is at leisure, the countess waits to receive him.

Gir. I attend her. Adieu, my dear Ernest, for a short time. Do not envy—do not regret—you are a true and a tried friend; and, though fate has not made you so lucky a dog as me, i'faith! Bacchus shall make you, this night, as jolly a dog as any in all the Russias.—Now for the priest, the proctor, and "my old woman."

[*Exit, followed by Victorine,* C. D.

Ern. Peace to her generous breast, and joy to your's. I will not envy, though I cannot share it. Now to resume my task: the likeness is happy, and a little finishing will make the picture complete. Sure, never was such symmetry in a wrinkled front, nor such intelligence in a grandam's eye. [*Sits to the table, and works at the picture.*] But virtue makes youth eternal, and here, for once, the face is a true index of the heart.

Enter MICHAEL, R.

Mic. Bless me! here is a wonderful wonder! My lady, who, till this moment, I thought a discreet and sober old gentlewoman, notwithstanding that certain something, of which I say nothing, because I know nothing—My Lady Grizzle, forsooth, is going to be mar-

ried, and to the colonel: well, I thought something would come of all her ladyship's kindness and attention to him. He must eat of the best, drink of the best, sleep in the best bed, and ride the best horse: they may well say "the gray old mare is the biggest jackass of the two." I say nothing; but—hem! here is my new lord's old friend. Now for congratulations and compliments.

Ern. [*To himself.*] Sure, never was a day so full of surprising events and agreeable associations.

Mic. You say right, sir. Your honour—hem! I take the liberty of congratulating you. Never was so happy a husband as my lord, never so kind a lady as the countess. To be sure, there are handsomer women, and younger, too; but then, my lord concluded, with the proverb, that "he might as well be hung for a sheep as a sucking-pig." I say nothing—but, as the friend of my most worthy lord and honourable new master, I would interest you in behalf of an old and faithful servant, who has been steward and major-domo of this castle for twenty years—who has served the countess truly for half a year—and felt an unalterable attachment to his lordship during half an hour—who had the honour to attend the late lord of these domains even to his grave—and who hopes to be equally attentive to the present possessor. I trust you will say a good word for me.

Ern. As far as my influence extends, you may rely on my recommendation.

Mic. It is kindly said, your honour; and, as at such times it is usual to give a great many good things, and to do a great many kind things—perhaps you will do me the favour to——

Ern. I understand: you will require a week's holyday to visit your friends in the country, or perhaps a trifle of ready cash.

Mic. Ah! your honour has "hit the right nail on the t'other end." A trifling bonus for a reasonable man—three or four thousand rubles would be very acceptable.

Ern. Three or four thousand rubles! You are unreasonable.

Mic. Not at all—a mere trifle, considering—there, he is lord of this fine domain, with a pocket-ful of gold, the rank of a noble, and the privilege of being buried in the cathedral: he may truly say with the proverb, "it never rains but it is wet weather." Ah, sir, I say nothing, but my lord would never have been master of one

stick or stiver, nor of my lady either, but for me—yes, me.

Ern. [*Aside.*] Arrogant blockhead! what do you mean?

Mic. Simply this: the countess is, heaven help her! a little old, and a little short-sighted; my lord, heaven help him! is a little giddy and a little exhilarated. "Many a little makes a pretty kettle of fish," and so, i'faith! they had nearly put "all the fish in the fire."

Ern. Psha! if you have nothing more sensible to say, pray leave me.

Mic. Sensible! I say nothing—but, if you had seen the marriage contract they sent me with, to my good old friend, the Notary—would you believe it? there were, absolutely, three or four complete nullities—the Notary pointed them out to me—three or four nullities, I say.

Ern. Well?

Mic. Well! no, indeed, "all is not well that begins badly"—it was a contract, and no contract—a thing that might have been broken to-morrow or to-night but for me.

Ern. What new spell is now at work? Speak quickly, I charge you.

Mic. According to the proverb, "a stitch in time saves many a ragged pair of breeches;" and so, with the Notary's assistance, I have expunged the stupid nullities; and, by the blessing of heaven, my lord and my lady are married for ever and ever.

Ern. Villain! what have you done?

Mic. The duty of a faithful servant.

Ern. You deserve to be throttled! [*Catching him by the throat.*] But there may be time yet to restore the contract. Fly, villain! fly to the church! stop the ceremony—undo the mischief you have done, or——

Voices without. Long live my lord! huzza!

Ern. What do I hear? It is too late—they are returned—poor Girouette! how shall I face him? He will certainly go to Siberia in despair, the lady will go crazy for his loss, and I shall go into mourning.

Mic. And where am I to go, an't please your honour?

Ern. To the devil. [*Exit*, L.

Mic. There's a civil return for civil conduct. Go to the devil, forsooth—no, no, I know my station better; and, according to the proverb, I shall "look before I walk down stairs," lest I should tread on the heels of my betters. [*Music without, and shouting.*] Ha! there they come—

my lady and my lord, and the company, and all the world—go to the devil, indeed—no, no, I shall go to the wedding-supper, and leave Mr. Olmutz himself to "go further and fare off bachelor's fare," with the privilege of toasting his own cheese. [*Exit*, R.

Music without.—*Enter* GIROUETTE *and* ERNEST, L.

Gir. Thanks, thanks, my friends—this is too much. Come, Ernest, a little retirement with you will be the more agreeable after these noisy honours.

Ern. It is then complete, and you are——

Gir. A discreet and sober married man. It took five-and-twenty years to make me what I was yesterday, but as many minutes have made a much greater person of me to-day.

Ern. The contract is really signed, and the rites duly solemnized?

Gir. Ay, and the bride's health drunk, and the cake put through the ring, and the throats of five or six hundred vassals hoarse with huzzaing all the way from church.

Ern. Alas! poor fellow!

Gir. Poor fellow, indeed! Come into the supper-room, look at my plate; come into the larder, look at my provision; come into the library, look at my rent-roll; come into the cellar, and taste my wine—that is, my wife's; but it is all the same, you know.

Ern. And all equally antique, I dare say.

Gir. This is ungenerous: but I scorn your jeers and your sneers; I am the happiest fellow in the world.

Ern. On my soul, you wrong me—a moment's patience, and I will explain all.

Gir. Patience—consider, it is my wedding-night, and the dear countess——

Ern. Is surrounded by her friends; she can spare you for half an hour.

Gir. Half an hour—an age—an epoch of time. No, no, the countess has helped me through difficulties and dangers; and I cannot withhold my attention and support when she may require it. Dear old woman! I begin to wish there was no romance in all this, and that I had bound myself irrevocably to the pleasant necessity of being attentive to her for ever.

Ern. You are not sincere.

Gir. Faithful as the loadstone; steady as the sun; fixed as a married man.

Ern. I am glad to find you in this mood; for I have something to communicate that will surprise you both.

Gir. Surprise! Ah, you rogue, a copy of verses on the occasion—such it is to have a genius for one's friend. Come along to the saloon: it will please my dear old woman, and I only live now for her. But, hark'ye, no scandal, I hope—no quizzing—what is this?

Ern. Sober reason—in plain language, you have solemnized a marriage that nothing but death can set aside.

Gir. Hang your jokes.

Ern. You will find it beyond a joke: that meddling fool, the steward, having been employed to procure the assistance of the lawyer, has mischievously expunged the nullities—the accommodating nullities, that the countess had expressly inserted in her instructions, for your advantage.

Gir. Patience! I am in a cold sweat—I am choking—I shall never survive.

Ern. Nay, I thought you had more philosophy.

Gir. Philosophy! fiddlestick! think of the jests an sneers I shall have to endure; think of the restraint I shall undergo with my wife's infirmities—no walking, because of her rheumatism; no riding, because of her sciatica; no company—no, her nerves cannot bear it; no visiting, she will be afraid to trust me—weary days—suppers without appetites—to bed at sunset, and sleeping between the blankets. Oh, who would marry a whole century?

Ern. Think of what you said just now.

Gir. Ah! that was when I thought it could not happen. For that rascal, Michael, I am determined the first act of my nobility shall be, to break every bone in his ass's skin.

Ern. That will not break your marriage contract.

Gir. True; but it will give me vengeance—the countess is here.

Ern. Hush! whatever may be your chagrin, prithee disguise it from your wife.

Gir. Wife! if you have any mercy for my poor ears, forget that abominable word; it is like cleaning one's teeth with scouring-paper.

Enter the COUNTESS, L.

Cou. My lord—Mr. Olmutz—

Ern. Madam.

Cou. Excuse me, sir—with my lord's permission, I could wish to have a few moments alone.

Ern. I am proud to obey that wish. [*Bowing.*

Cou. Nay, nay, you are—all a friend should be, who takes in good part what is not meant to offend.

[*Exit Ernest*, R.

Gir. [*Aside.*] He is all a friend usually is in disagreeable extremities: he gladly takes the opportunity of running away.

Cou. Sir, you see me in a different temper to what I would be on this day.

Gir. [*Aside.*] Out of temper, too—somebody has trod on her corns.

Cou. Yet, when you shall learn what my steward has just acquainted me with.

Gir. Madam, I have learned it all. [*Sighs.*

Cou. Bitter acquisition—say, can you forgive?

Gir. The blockhead, Michael, only is to blame.

Cou. True. Heaven is my witness, it was my wish, my intention, my fondest hope, to have restored you to liberty, your country, your friends, and your mother: but this unfortunate event has deranged all my plans, and made me the most miserable woman in the world.

Gir. [*Aside.*] I see that, spite of my chagrin, 'tis I must be the comforter—

Cou. If, however, I have been unable to prevent this untoward accident, I will, at least, endeavour all in my power to repair it. Listen, sir—since the moment I owed my life to your heroic firmness, I have sought an opportunity to acquit myself of some part of that invaluable obligation.

Gir. Madam, I have been more than overpaid by your indulgence and your friendship——

Cou. Nay, nay, let me proceed—I had formed a design, to place the half of my fortune at your disposal, but I had not intended you to purchase it so dearly. The stratagem that I was searching to induce you to accept my gift, is now no longer needful; for I have now the right to give, and you have no longer the right to refuse.

Gir. Madam, I am overpowered—I cannot——

Cou. Nay, nay: do not deprive me of the only advantage my unhappy situation offers—you have a mother whom you cherish, treat me like her—allow me to assume a small part of her rights—perhaps I may deserve this much by the tenderness I feel for you. In her name, permit me to ask you one question—is your heart disposed of? [*Impressively.*

Gir. I have before answered you—no, madam.

Cou. Do you say this solemnly?

Gir. That heart cannot deceive you.

Cou. It is well—I breathe again, for I have not to answer for another's misery, and you will the more readily forgive me. Now mark me, my lord: we must part—the title you gain by our union, will easily procure your free passage home; and in Paris, I am told, an income of two hundred thousand livres will enable you to live independently and gayly. Go, then, and enjoy it—be happy—be content—at six hundred leagues' distance, you may be almost unmarried—but do not forget me—write to me when you have an hour that hangs heavily—tell me of your pleasures—make me a partner in your happiness—nay, let me know your friendships and your affections—I will not be jealous, I will not be uncharitable, for my only desire is to live and to die your friend. [*With emotion.*

Gir. Madam—my dear—no—I am—that is, you are—zounds! is this a trance or a paroxysm? Am I sensibly insane, or madly in love? Who would not be in love with such an amiable creature? Ah, why was I not born forty years sooner!

Cou. Or I fifty years later!

Gir. To pass a long life in the society of such a being would be more than mortal happiness.

Cou. Still, when anon you meet some lady—young, handsome, engaging—such a one as you ought to love—you will regret that life is yet so lasting. One reflection, however, consoles me—it is, that I am very aged, and in all probability may not long——

Gir. Hold, I beseech you. What have I said or done to make you think, for one instant, that the death of my benefactress would relieve me? No—your happiness and mine are as closely blended as our fates; and whatever may happen, or however the world may sport with me, I am resolved never to quit you—never to be released

from the sweet bondage, that makes me at once your husband and your protector.

Cou. From you alone could I expect such indulgence; and, though I will not profit by your annoyance, yet, believe me, I can never forget your avowal.—But it is late: our friends are preparing to depart—let us hasten to them.

Gir. They approach to take their leaves—my arm—[*She offers to take his right arm.*] no, the left, for that is nearest your own empire. [*She takes the left arm.*

Enter VICTORINE *and Guests*, L.

INTRODUCTION AND CHORUS.

Vic. My gentle lord and lady, friends are drawing near.
Cou. To offer their regards and praise your noble cheer.
Gir. Approach—be love and friendship ever welcome here.

CHORUS.

Content, the heart's best treasure,
Long attend the happy pair;
And true love, linked with pleasure,
Smooth every frown of care.
Oh! light be all their slumbers,
Free from visions that annoy;
And hope, with her sweet fairy numbers,
Awaken them to joy.
With mirth and wine abounding,
The hours have taken flight!
Too soon the parting note is sounding,
Farewell! good night!

[*The Countess and Gironette take leave of the Guests, who retire severally, as the curtain falls.*

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The Drawing-Room, as before.*

ERNEST *discovered at the table, finishing the picture*—VICTORINE *enters*, C. D., *unperceived by him.*

Ern. At length the portrait is complete.

Vic. [*Aside, and trying to overlook him.*] How I long to catch a glimpse of it!

Ern. Yes, Gironette, with this memorial in your bosom, however remote the time or place, your benefac-

tress cannot be forgotten. Happy art! that wakes the constant smile of those we love.

Vic. Happy, indeed! what else has our regret to live upon? [*Still unperceived by Ernest.*

Ern. Now, to the mirthful scene again.—Yet, alas! I can partake it not. Where disappointment lays her icy hand, the quick emotions of the heart are paralyzed, and moody dulness fills their desert place. Lovely Victorine! how much happier might have been our bridal hour! [*Sighs.*

Vic. Alas! [*Sighs.*

Ern. How!—am I overheard? Youngster, this intrusion——

Vic. Is indecorus—I crave pardon.

Ern. And the mockery of my involuntary sigh.

Vic. Pardon me, again—it was not mockery, but nature—the sympathetic echo of one who partakes your gloom, in the midst of all this joy.

Ern. Psha, boy! to your song and dance—leave sighs and cares to me: you are a green philosopher in these matters.

Vic. I have studied them deeply.

Ern. Precept, without practice.

Vic. Not entirely—at least, for the future, not without example, for I shall have your's.

Ern. How, sirrah?

Vic. Do not start: my schooling has taught me to read lovers' looks; and, in your face, I espy a whole treatise.

Ern. Ha, ha! I pray thee, in what gossip college have you culled this amorous lore?

Vic. The best in the world—in the confidence of an unsuspecting girl.

Ern. You have been lackey to some sentimental opera squaller,—eh?

Vic. Sir! [*Indignantly.*

Ern. Pardon!—Conveyer of billet-doux to some fascinating Parisian goddess, who coquetted with a score of lovers——

Vic. With nineteen, I admit; but to one she was faithful—faithful, to her cost, for he deceived her, and she suffers without reproaching him.

Ern. And prithee, young philosopher, how came you to rove so far away from your Parisian Penelope?

Vic. By dire necessity, and a tinge of that romance which she had taught me.

Ern. She found you a little too fond of romance, I suspect, and banished you, to cool your ardour, here.

Vic. Not so; she was the heiress of a proud and wealthy family; she became attached to a gay young countryman of your's, who, to obtain free access to her home, assumed the title of a Russian nobleman——

Ern. What do I hear?

Vic. He gained her consent to a private marriage—her powerful guardian traced them to the church—interrupted the ceremony—instantly confined the lady in the convent of St. Ursula, at Thoulouse—and, by his persecution, obliged the pretended count to quit France for ever!

Ern. Surely the book of Fate is here laid open.

[*With surprise.*

Vic. Not so; else, to peruse the future, how gladly would I turn the sullied leaves that tell of what has intervened——

Ern. At this distance—and under such circumstances—proud boy, if you know more of this eventful tale, beseech you, tell me all!

Vic. That all is compassed in a few brief words:—the receipt of letters, by the young noviciate of Thoulouse, was, of course, denied—those she continued to forward to her lover never reached him, having been addressed with the fictitious title he had taken——

Ern. Fool that I was!

Vic. In a desperate hour she escaped from the nunnery—in disguise she travelled across the continent—and, in despair, she found, on her arrival at St. Petersburg, that the real Count Rodolf was—a stranger!

Ern. Can this be?—has Victorine done this?—speak, boy, is she free?—is she in Petersburg?—tell me quickly, for I must, I will pursue her!

Vic. You! Mr. Olmutz, the painter?

Ern. Yes, I, the lover—the deceiver—the wretched Ernest Olmutz! who betrayed the confidence of the purest of her sex—who, even in the moment of extremity, had not the candour to confess his inferior station.

Vic. Despair not: where hearts are true, power and riches may outweigh the scale, but love can strike the balance.

Ern. Do not torture me with suspense! If you are anything but a delusive shadow in my dream, tell me—oh, tell me, where I may trace the lovely wanderer—where I may throw myself at her feet, crave her pardon, and make her happy.

Vic. And if you are really what you now appear—if you are quite sure there is no more masquerading, and that you are not, after all, a duke or a tinker in ambush, know, that your pilgrimage will be short, and your penance, I fancy, very lenient; for Mademoselle Victorine is, at this moment——

Ern. Where?—oh, where? in France, in Russia? in the whole world?

Vic. In this good town of Wilna. And, moreover, if my forebodings are correct, she will be in this very castle, ere midnight.

Ern. Thanks! thanks, thou prince of pages, and thou king of conjurors! I burn with impatience to meet her once again. If thou hast deceived me, beware! for I will puff thee out with the first sigh of my despair. If thou art correct, thou shalt live for ever, for I will paint thee as a Cupid companion to Titian's Venus. Victorine, we may be happy, still! [*Exit*, R.

Vic. Ha, ha, ha! well done, rhapsody! If I am to be your Cupid, I trust you will give me suitable weapons; for, you will find, I can shoot with a long bow, and hit the mark at last. Ha, ha! Poor Ernest! he is so bewildered with the pictures of his fancy, that he never thought of peeping under the page's cap for the original; nor dreamed that it was by the request of that madcap original, that her good friend, the countess, was induced to invite him here. Dear lady! what do I not owe to thee for friendship and protection in my perilous enterprise. Yes, in this history, I have retraced my own—it is a dreary pilgrimage, but hope is dawning, and I would forget the night-clouds that are passing away. Oh, this love! this love! it is a lottery of chances, in which Cupid deals the cards, but Fortune rules the game.

SONG.

Cupid was hood-winked and blind,
And often he wandered astray;
Till truth the dark bandage untwined,
And showed him the thorns in his way.
Now, fearlessly, onward the young urchin flies,
And love seems all pleasure since Cupid found eyes.

But Dame Fortune the bandage has ta'en,
And bound up her blue eyes so tight,
That all ranks of people complain
She can't see the wrong from the right.
And since we must follow to sue for her prize,
Let lovers be cautious, though Cupid has eyes.

[*Exit*, L.

SCENE II.—*An Anti-Room.*

Enter MICHAEL, R.

Mic. Here is a hubbub and a confusion! Mr. Olmutz coolly sends me to the devil; I, as in duty bound, run directly to my lady—and, behold! I get "out of the frying-pan into the tea-kettle."—I say nothing, but there is certainly something at the bottom of all this, and my pretty Catharine's secret, if I could but get at it, might possibly throw a little light on the dark subject.—Oh! here she comes—though every body else should snub me and scorn me, she will compassionate my sufferings; and when I approach her with my usual complacent tenderness, she will say, in the sweetest tone imaginable, Master Witzgoff, you are——

Enter CATHARINE, L.

Cat. You are the greatest villain in the world.

Mic. Hey-day! have I lost my senses?

Cat. You never had any.

Mic. Give me patience——

Cat. Give you a rope's end—mischief-maker!

Mic. "Mad as a march-oyster!" but, madam, I'd have you to know, that I am steward and major-domo here; and that I am not to be treated with indignity—for, according to the proverb "when the kettle calls the pot names, it is not agreeable."

Cat. The more disagreeable, the more suitable for such as you—to think that you should be stupid and wicked enough to make my poor lady so wretched—but I have done with you for ever.

Enter VICTORINE, L.

Vic. I am glad to hear it, my dear: my lady has done with him—my lord has *not* done with him—and I shall certainly do for him—yes, we will make a scare-crow of him for the next summer, that sensible people may be able to walk about unmolested, and enjoy all kinds of fruit except *medlars!*

Mic. How now, jackanapes! I swear—no, I never swear—the proverb says—no, it don't—but, if you had a beard—gadzooks! I say, sirrah bare-chin!

Vic. Well, sir, what do you say?

Mic. I say nothing,—"fine words butter no onions."

Vic. A very sage resolve: come along, Catharine; our poor dear lady is about to retire to her chamber, and requires your assistance at the toilette.

[*Catharine takes her arm.*

Mic. Catharine—you surely don't mean to go with the butterfly—the moth—the lady-bird!

Cat. With anything, to shun such a black-beetle as you!

Vic. Ha! ha! ha! good night, master beetle! take care, lest the *Boy* should pin you to a string, and set you spinning for the edification of buzzing old bachelors.

[*Exeunt Victorine and Catharine,* R.

Mic. Is this to be endured? shall I, who have ruled the roast for twenty years, at last submit to be roasted myself? by a boy, too—and a paltry French boy, withal—ah! I say nothing, but I have a thought—to-morrow, at day-break, all the French, with beards and without, are ordered to start for Siberia. I will run to the governor of Wilna—the varlet shall not escape. Thus I shall serve the state, punish the traitor, and vex the false Catharine. Yes, if the jackanapes will meddle with ladies who are lawfully engaged, he shall find, according to the proverb, that, "what is one man's meat may prove another boy's blister."

[*Exit,* L.

SCENE III.—*The Boudoir of the Countess. The entrance-door is at the back—a chamber door on each side, an elegant toilette towards the front,* L.—*a cheffonier with books &c. opposite.*

Enter VICTORINE, C., *with lights, conducting the* COUNTESS *and* GIROUETTE, *followed by* CATHARINE *and Attendants —Victorine lights the candles on the toilette, and places one of those brought in, onthe cheffonier.*

Cou. Thanks, thanks, my good lord; you have safely conducted me here,—now let us say good night, and gentle sleep attend us. Good night.

Gir. But, my dear lady, this is so singular—I——

Cou. Nay, nay, I have arranged everything. Yonder is your chamber. [*Pointing to* R. D.] This will be mine.

[*Pointing to* L. D.] Calm slumber and soothing dreams be your portion. Good night.

Gir. Your ladyship's kindness will shed a balm around my pillow. [*Aside.*] She is certainly the sweetest creature, and the most accommodating manager, in the world. Madam, good night.

[*Kisses her hand, takes the light off the chiffonier, and is about to enter the chamber,*

Cou. Victor, you rose early this morning; get you to bed, boy.

Vic. Blessings to my gentle lady!

[*Kisses her hand and exit,* L. D.

Gir. Eh!—what do I see?—gone to bed in my wife's chamber, too! [*Returns.*] Madam, I—the Page—really, this is——

Cou. Nay, nay, my lord, it is well—a mere arrangement of convenience. Ever since I have sojourned in this castle, the boy has slept on a pallet in my chamber, as a harmless protection. At my time of life—

Gir. True, madam; of you there is nothing to fear; but the world——

Cou. Ah, my lord, scandal has too much to do with the young, to trouble herself about characters of fourscore years' standing.

Gir. [*Aside.*] A peculiar dilemma, 'faith! Shall I coolly draw my night-cap over my eyes, and see nothing?—No! I—that is—madam, I really——

Cou. Nay, nay, if you prefer a little more chit-chat—

Gir. You will suffer me, then, to remain with you?

Cou. My lord has the right to choose. Believe me, your company will be very agreeable; with me, I assure you, the duties of the toilette are tedious enough: it takes a long time to make wrinkles and gray hairs passable; so sit down, I shall waive all ceremony with you.

Gir. So it appears.

[*She sits to the toilette, surrounded by Catharine and three Femmes de Chambre.*

Cou. You seem dull, my lord; perhaps, as conversation flags, you will read to me.

Gir. [*Aside.*] Yes, I will read a lecture on connubial patience, the eightieth chapter, and the first verse.

Cou. You will find some interesting volumes yonder, my lord.

Gir. Volumes, madam!—[*Aside.*] What shall I do? I

will not leave her, that's fixed—so—hem! If I am to read, madam, perhaps you will allow me to peruse the volume you so kindly presented to me this morning.

Cou. It is well—nothing more appropriate; though the stories are familiar, I assure you, some of them are very interesting to me. Proceed.

Gir. [*Sits opposite to her, takes the volume from his bosom, and reads.*] Hem! "*Anecdotes of the Memorable Campaign in Russia; collected by Elizabeth, Countess of Xenia, and written with her own Hand.*" Posterity will envy me the first possession of this volume. Let me see—"*On the fifth of September, the Hetman Platoff received intelligence, from a young market-girl of Wornich,*"—I remember your ladyship told me that anecdote, one evening, in the alcove, at the bottom of the garden. [*Turns over the leaves.*] "*Anecdote Twenty.—The Young Widow's Stratagem.*" This is interresting! "*A short time previously to the war, a young orphan of eighteen was married, by her guardian's authority, to an aged count, who held a high post in the Russian army, the Count X————, who possessed an immense fortune and estate. When the campaign commenced, the young wife followed her lord, and shared with him the fatigues and dangers of the field.*" Singularly affectionate and praiseworthy! was it not, madam?

Cou. She was not the only one, my lord.

Gir. "*In the first rencounter, the old general was mortally wounded; his wife remained by his side, and received his expiring sigh*"—poor forlorn lady!

Cou. [*Sighs.*] Forlorn, indeed! but proceed, my lord—

Gir. "*She found herself alone, in a wild tract of country, occupied and surrounded by enemies: she was three hundred miles from home; she was young, she was rather pretty; she scarcely knew what step to take for protection and safety*"—Very interesting, is it not?

Cou. And very true; I can vouch for it—go on, go on.

Gir. "*At last she resolved to pass for the mother of her husband, whose namesake she was. The stratagem was soon put in execution; she bent her back, distorted her features, and, by means of snow-white locks and antique costume, assumed the appearance of a very discreet old age; persuaded that wrinkles were better defenders than Polish lances.*"—Ha, ha, ha! and the stupid louts never discovered the trick! ha, ha, ha! If I had been there——

Cou. Be assured, you would have shared in their blindness: a woman is not easily found out, when she

resolves firmly. But proceed, my lord; you will never get to the end.

Gir. "*All went on well for some time; but, in her route to a chateau in Poland, which she had purchased for her retirement, it was necessary to pass the night in the same apartment with a young officer, who had travelled several leagues in her carriage without suspecting her.*"—Ha, ha, ha! now comes the cream of the story. What would I not give to have been that purblind young officer?

Cou. You do not read, my lord; prithee, proceed.

Gir. Thick-headed booby! ha, ha! What a situation for a young fellow! what a scene for a comedy!

Cou. Perhaps you will allow me to finish the comedy; the manuscript is not very clear, and I fancy you are rather near-sighted, my lord.

Gir. Not at all: observe, I can read it at a yard distance. I long for the denouement.

Cou. Pardon me; I shall come to the denouement more speedily. [*Rising from the toilette, surrounded by her Attendants.*] Ah, my lord! I knew the lady well; I was her confidant, and she my dearest friend: a little romantic, it is certain; but faithful where she promised, and tender where she loved; in short——

Gir. In short, a most expert and amiable hypocrite.

Cou. Nay, nay; she was no more a hypocrite, my lord, than I am at this moment.

[*Approaches to take the book—Catharine and Attendants taking off her robe, veil, &c., she appears in an elegant youthful dress.*

Gir. What do I see? A spirit! a fairy! a dream!

Cou. No, my lord; a real, tangible, undisguised, and very humble person—your wife—your "old woman."

Gir. [*Embracing her.*] I am enraptured! enchanted!

[*Knocking at the door.*

Cou. Ah! some intruders are here—[*Drums beat without.*] and soldiers, too, my lord. Suffer me to retire—we must part.

Gir. Never!

Cou. Pardon me—remember our compact.

Gir. But I have changed my mind—

Cou. It is too late—yonder is your apartment—this is mine—it must be so—good night.

Gir. And the page, madam. [*Violent knocking.*

Cou. Will be my harmless protector still—Victor,

prepare to defend the door—the blunderbuss—the blunderbuss—ladies, follow me.

[*Exeunt Countess, Catharine, and Ladies,* L.

Gir. Confusion! madam—my lady—a most horrible dilemma! the door locked against me, a blunderbuss at the keyhole, and a confounded young rascal tête à tête with my wife.

Ern. [*Without.*] Holloa! Girouette! my friend!

Gir. What will all this come to? My lady! my friend! Oh! I am a fool, a dupe, a madman!

[*Opens door,* C.

Enter ERNEST, C. D.

Ern. Good heavens! what means all this disorder?

Gir. Means, that the devil is lord paramount here—that "my old woman" is a young beauty—that I am a horrid ass, and that I am thirsting for vengeance on a villain.

Ern. I, too, have a just revenge to gratify—the coxcomb has deceived me—belied my charming Victorine. My dear Girouette, if you have any regard for an injured man's feelings, deliver up that monster.

Enter MICHAEL, *followed by an Officer and four Soldiers,* C.

Gir. How now, sirrah?

Mic. If your honourable lordship has any regard for justice, let me seize the young Beelzebub.

Gir. Guards here, too. Soldiers, what is your errand?

Off. By order of the governor, to arrest a recreant, who must start for Siberia at sunrise.

Gir. I am bewildered—name your victim.

Off. Her ladyship's page.

Ern. The infernal page!

Mic. The devilish page!

Gir. The damned page! I shall burst.

Mic. He sleeps in this apartment—my lady's chamber.

Gir. Confusion! must I be thus exposed?

[*Stops his mouth.*

Off. Have we your lordship's leave to force the door?

Gir. Ay, and to fire the castle—so, that villain page and my dishonour may perish together!

Ern. Come out, thou perjurer!

Mic. Come out, thou seducer!

Gir. Come out, thou devil!

[*The Soldiers force the door, and discover the Countess, Catharine, and Ladies, in a group, guarded by Victorine in her own dress, with the page's cap, and a blunderbuss pointed.*

Ern. What do I see?—Victorine!

Vic. Yes, Victorine. Faithful to her friend and duty.

Cou. That friend has shared your anxiety, and partakes your joy.

Ern. Now is the tale of enchantment realized.

Gir. Enchanting, indeed! 'Faith, I'm so transported and bewildered, that I begin to suspect this spot must be Arabia, and myself the hero of a night's entertainment.

Cou. My lord, the spell is broken, but the charm, I trust, continues. In love, as in war, stratagems are often needful, and may surely hope for pardon, when they innocently succeed.

Ern. The romance is now complete! and I am blessed, indeed!

Cat. At length the wondrous secret is divulged.—Thus I repay my debt of love and honour.

[*Giving her hand to Michael.*

Mic. [*Kisses her.*] My pretty Catharine! my honoured old lady, and honourable young lady, too!—well, I say nothing, but, according to right reason, the proverb truly says, "the devil is never so black as a white satin gown!"

Off. And the page, our prisoner——

Cou. By marriage with a native, will be so no more. I say, will any one give my friend an inheritance here?

Ern. For ever! if marriages are made above, she is a Russian wife already. [*Shouts without.*

Enter Guests, Peasants, &c.

Cou. My friends, my vassals, you expect to find us in dismay, but you behold us in content and harmony. Fate made me aged at an early season, but affection and the cheering smiles of friends will keep me young for ever. Michael, lead the way,—we will back to the saloon, and give the night to merry dance and song.

Gir. Nay, my sweet spouse, excuse me—'tis true, I could wish to spend a few jovial hours with this agreeable assembly—but, I pray your pardon, friends, it is my wedding-night; therefore, do me the favour to look in to-morrow, and I'm sure your company will be truly ac-

ceptable to all parties, and especially to—"My Old Woman."

FINALE.

Away with doubt and sadness,
And discords that annoy;
Here mirth, and wine, and gladness,
Shall welcome love and joy!
Old Time, with Fate compounding,
Shall scatter wrinkles never!
And smiling friends surrounding
Make Pleasure reign for ever.

[*The Curtain falls.*

DISPOSITION OF THE CHARACTERS AT THE FALL OF THE CURTAIN.

Peasants and Vassals.

Ladies. *Attendants.* *Guests.* *Officer and Soldiers.*

NIC MIC. CAT COU. GIR. VIC. ERN. PET.

R.] [L.

THE END.